

AN EXPLORATION OF THE WORDS AND THEIR  
SIGNIFICANCE IN MY ART

PROBLEM IN LIEU OF THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For several years I have been using mixed media in making art. This included the use of many different kinds of paper such as 100% rag printing paper in many colors, various rice paper and watercolor paper of different weights. The images were printed on the etching press with both natural objects (weeds, flowers, leaves, etc.) and etched plates, using watercolor and printing inks. After printing, the works were reassembled into collages in a more or less traditional rectangular format, sometimes incorporating drawing.

More recently, words and phrases from my "thought book," (a notebook for scribbling thoughts and ideas at odd moments) were added to the collage pieces. These words and phrases arose from intense emotions and introspection of personal events from life's experiences. I discovered, quite by accident, that the words fit into the context of my prints. Combining the words and prints seemed to be a natural progression, and contributed to a deeper meaning/content. By layering the pieces, I created diverse and intricate print collages with unusual formats (folded, freeform pieces, square, etc.) which added a new dimension to the work, and

enabled me to state more clearly my creative desires in whatever physical form I happened to choose. The words and phrases are sometimes contradictory or, at least, ambiguous in meaning. My intent has been to create an element of complexity in order to fuse the form and idea into an abstraction with my own personal touch. The work has always been pure fantasy, and at the same time, autobiographical.

The purpose of this project has been to consider the importance of the words in my work. The problem was to focus more clearly on the use of words and their relationship to the visual elements and content. It was hoped also that it would determine how the work is altered by these factors.

The questions proposed were

1. What significant purpose do words and phrases serve as content in my work?
2. Are the words of literal or nonliteral meaning and what is the effect of each on the work?
3. Can visual equivalents be beneficial in expressing these ideas and thoughts without using the actual words?

The schematic of this project was to create ten prints, choosing phrases from my "thought book" for five pieces and omitting the use of words or phrases from five others. I kept notes throughout the working process which would facilitate the final documentation of the project.

## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF WORK

I chose to discuss only four pieces from the project in order not to become redundant or repetitive. Because it was so difficult to explain and analyze the work, I tried to be succinct and to state my thoughts clearly.

Ironically, the first piece completed for the project was entitled Benediction. The outcome was disappointing to me and because of this disillusionment, I decided to use it in the analysis. The others were selected for various reasons; A Distance From Reality because of its strong symbolism and also it was one of my favorite pieces, Our Lives Are Surrealistic Nightmares because it reflects my ideas for understanding personal feelings and emotions, and Pictorial Language because of my emotional attachment to nature and the need for exploring the connection of life's experiences with my art. These aspects of symbolism, feelings, emotions and life's experiences, would, I believed, help validate the results of my creative project.

For this project, I chose to utilize many different papers. Some were tinted before hand, others were printed without ink, and some were used in their original state. The quality of the paper and its character was a prime consideration.

I sometimes printed the prepared plates on each kind of paper to see which was best for my intended thought. When I had created enough printed pieces, I began the construction. Laying all the pieces out on a work table, a sorting and arranging process began. This was the most difficult, time-consuming and important part of my work.

The plates were etched with spontaneous, instinctive and uncontrived drawings, so that there was no recognizable image, but rather a feeling of emotion expressed. I also tried to execute this feeling through color, texture and the layering of the paper itself. Some pieces were done over and over again before they seemed right. The plates were done with intuitive feeling rather than with conscious intent. At some point, the words began to form. Seldom did I start out to put the words directly into a visual context, knowing all along the outcome. This visual expression of my personal feeling was sometimes a total surprise. At other times, I had to rework the plate, or reassemble the construction, in order for the art to satisfy my creative desires.

Slide #1: A Distance From Reality

For example, the piece of art examined first was initiated by thoughts of loneliness. To express the word, "lonely," a non-color such as white seemed appropriate. Since I was feeling only loneliness, not despair, white on white became my goal. Other words, cold, distant, and unreal came to mind

and from there, the work progressed smoothly and rather quickly. The decision to use a large, deeply etched plate on white BFK printing paper for the background was based on the fact that the heavily textured plate seemed to imply the distance I wanted to express. During this development stage, the words "hot ice" also came to mind and it struck me how contradictory and unreal that was. Now the problem was to settle on a phrase that would best express what I was feeling at that time. A Distance From Reality came quite easily and from there the work progressed further. I printed three different textured plates on several white and off-white papers. I also printed a marbled pattern with very transparent ink on rice paper. When I had achieved a quantity of printed material, I began to lay it out in various arrangements. Other unprinted papers were added later. Shapes were torn and assembled according to instinct and feeling. The tearing itself was a significant act, and helped to establish a working format for my spontaneous thoughts and feeling. It was going together rather well, but at that point, I stopped to look at the piece, and felt that it needed strength in the form of a primary emphasis. A linear element, possibly gold thread, came to mind. The emphasis was accomplished by dipping twine in acrylic medium and then into gold pigment. This addition of gold in a continuous line reminded me of lasting richness, which would be somewhat contradictory, but would fit into the context of the unreal feeling about the work.



The construction was totally intuitive and spontaneous, but the printing of the plates was determined by an earlier decision. While the words were with me from the beginning, I incorporated them last. Individual words at first, became a flowing and usable phrase when printed. Since the piece was horizontal, the words, I felt, should move across the surface in a continuous flow. They were printed from a piece of mat board, upon which I had fashioned the letters from acrylic gel. A nonobtrusive flow of words was my goal so that they would be seen on second glance, not first. The first impact should be the cold, unreality of white on white.

Slide #2: Our Lives Are Surrealistic Nightmares

"The Second Time is Better," a phrase from my "thought book," came to mind as I began this piece. It was the second time I had made a piece of art using the thought-line, "Our Lives a Surrealistic Nightmare." (This was the way it was first written.) In the first piece, the construction format, color and image were all completely different. The only element in common was the phrase.

The "surrealistic nightmare" line was written several months ago, at a time of severe emotional turmoil in my life. I have found that it often has been the traumatic experiences that helped me understand and attempt to explain certain aspects of my own reality through my art.

It has been difficult to examine and deal with my very personal feelings in an easy and open way, even with the indirect approach that my constructions revealed. Nevertheless, the new format for expression was a breakthrough for me, with an almost spiritual meaning and, I hope, an exciting visual experience for the viewer.

The plate used was previously executed, containing a central female figure upon a background of organic forms. To reduce recognition of the image, and to develop a more fantasy-like atmosphere, I re-etched the plate with an open bite. It was printed at least eight times on five kinds of paper. I first used metallic silver ink on textured rice paper and then gray rice paper. The silver on lightweight rice paper produced a delicate and subtle feeling and appearance. A banded roll of silver, transparent blue and mauve was used for a soft ethereal quality and two kinds of white paper were printed. Then, two of the original prints were over-printed with a marbled pattern in the same colors. The floating images of the re-etched plate were enhanced by the atmospheric color and produced the surrealistic impression I was looking for. The overall effect was working well at that point. To indicate different levels of awareness, both conscious and subconscious, I wanted the piece to have many layers. This was easily accomplished and the work stood vertically, having four stable sides and eight viewing surfaces, enabling the viewer to see the multiple facets all at once.

The purpose of this method of presentation was to bring to a fuller realization the complexity of our lives, our dreams and our nightmares.

The use of the words was symbolic, communicating deep and almost indefinable feelings with the visual elements as counterbalance. In my mind, the piece was both aesthetically and emotionally strong.

Slide #3: Pictorial Language

Intuition and individual expression in my art has gradually brought together a new and different self-absorbing imagery of a personal style. Concerned with the expression of my own emotional experiences of nature, I am drawn to earth's layers of strata and the complexity of its elements. I have sensual as well as spiritual feelings about nature. This approach to contrasts both enriched and clarified my ideas and was significant in the completion of this work.

Pictorial Language came together by instinct rather than reason. It seemed to almost build itself without a great deal of conscious thought on my part. I started with the heavy brown rice paper, depicting earth itself; simple layering at first, with each subsequent layer suggesting something new and different. It was impossible to know what would come next until it appeared. With each tear, subtraction or addition, I felt changes occur and responded according to impulse. This was one of the pieces without words, so I

had to transform my thoughts into visual equivalents. With this particular piece, it did not seem difficult because my thoughts were about nature and my relationship to it. The contrast of the brown textured rice paper to the shiny gold and the delicacy of the lace rice paper was ideally suited to my goals for the piece. All of these extremes and differences were the complex and contradictory elements with which the piece would achieve the anticipated outcome. A harmony of form and color and a variety of texture, I felt, was the essence of my feeling about nature and my somewhat unreal existence with it. At one point I had added another lower section, but after studying it for a long period, I decided it was redundant and removed it. I am sure that it was a good decision. Because it is so difficult to restrain myself when I am involved in a work, I am often "carried away" with the creative process. Intense but unformed concepts crowd my mind constantly and quite often these ideas change several times before the completion of an effort such as this.

Slide #4: Benediction

The plate used here was also used in a previous construction, Mockery Not Intended. At that time I was expressing an emotional quandry about religion. I was very satisfied with the success of that particular piece, therefore, I was excited with the idea of using that same plate to instigate

another. The unique and subtle textures contained in this plate would serve to express yet another spiritual mood.

I had reached a turning point--although not an obvious or apparent one--it was the end of a phase of both my work and my life. At road's end for one phase, a challenging and changing beginning for the next. The word "benediction" was suggested to me regarding another image, but it fit this image so well, I decided to use it.

The light gray BFK paper was a beautiful choice and when it was printed inkless, reminded me of a stone's surface. As the textured gray prints lay on my work table next to red rice paper, their juxtaposition had a very pleasing effect. The red fulfilled the need for impact and the gold edges added richness.

I always think, and work, in curves and seldom do I use straight or hard lines. I began to tear pieces from the chosen papers and laid them out with the red rice paper, placing and replacing in various arrangements. It could have been in any of a number of different forms, but this curvilinear theme seemed to come back each time I rearranged.

There was a feeling of topographical forms, and yet, an overall ethereal essence was sensed. The ethereal quality created in me an enigmatic impression which was strangely appealing. Nevertheless, the appeal of this work was not what I had expected and was disappointing. The majestic and

mysterious qualities were not as strong as I would have liked. The complexity and depth was not achieved.

I discovered, in this piece, the further development of symbolism in my art. This element needs more exploration at a later date. It was apparent from this work, too, that each piece need not be successful to be valuable to my research.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to discover the significance of the words as an element in my work. With a great deal of introspection, I was able to discern and better understand my own motivation and the basis for my art. The work did not come easily, but with a painful process of trial and error. There were many images printed that were never used and more constructions were made than were proposed. This was necessary in order to give me latitude to explore various possibilities of development. More than ten constructions were produced with some very satisfying results. In one manner or another there was gratification in each piece of work, and that gave the entire project and its product credibility.

Any appeal found in my decorative and personal art has its roots in everyday experiences. From my life's chaos and turmoil has come impressions that have shaped and directed my conscious and subconscious creativity. I tried, in this body of work, to rely on the four functions of consciousness that Carl G. Jung refers to: thought, feeling, intuition and sensation, to guide the creative expression in an open and uninhibited way. This gave me freedom to perceive the

world around me in a natural way rather than through interpretation. The rationalization of this perception is the basis of my style, which is a spontaneous reaction to instinctual and emotional stimuli presented in an unusual format.

After many weeks of writing words into my "thought book," out of frustration, the art began to develop slowly, then rapidly. Emotions produced words and, in turn, words produced thoughts, then actions and reactions, which became constructions.

It was very difficult to analyze the work or the process because my art is a visual expression of my personal feelings. It was possible to perceive many different visual concepts from one phrase so some restrictions were needed. This meant concentrating on one or two elements to limit the overwhelming possibilities of combinations that were presented. Often I would try to discern which colors or values, shapes or textures, and format would suggest the feeling which most pleased me. Also, because the work was so spontaneous, I often changed directions in mid-work. With my art, I discovered that there was constant potential for change and only by conscious decision, did I ever finish a piece. Sometimes after a day, a week, or even a month, I might feel reedification was necessary.



The purpose of words and phrases, as content, developed in two distinct ways throughout this project. In the beginning, words initiated the art, but later this methodology reversed. Sometimes interesting paper, unusual shapes, beautiful colors or a combination of these, brought the appropriate words to mind. Although I use the words literally, they are also symbolic and this personal symbolism is the content of the work, therefore the words themselves, are of nonliteral meaning. There is always an effort made for an abstract visual order, to bring unity into the piece and then to make the words, somehow, an integral part of that order, not distracting, but adding to and enriching the art. Consequently, I am never able to see my work with objective awareness, but only with subjectivity. This situation does not bother me for my work is the essence of my life's experiences and will always be extremely personal.

Jung states that a symbol is a word or image that appears when there is a need to express what thought cannot think or what is only devined or felt. The most abstruse emotions or feelings are symbolized in shape, color, texture, and words within the context of my art. The content, therefore, is an often confused or self-contradictory attempt to express visually what is too personal to express verbally. The visual aspects of the work are very valuable and frequently express the equivalent feelings that are intrinsic to the thought in

many of the pieces. It is important to me that I continue to use this aspect of visual equivalency in the context of my work for my own further development and understanding.

A personal satisfaction and emotional outlet are possibly the only justification and purpose for the use of the words in my art. However, that is reason enough, and I accept that reasoning. Most important, is the direct encounter with the art and I have tried to articulate my thoughts into a visual format in order to capture the viewer's imagination. Changes and possibilities exist in each individual's perception of the work. The words are an integral part of my art and for my own edification rather than that of the viewer. There is an unmistakable distinction between the perception of meaning and recognition of image or object. The words are not dependent on the decorative elements of the piece nor do the visual elements affect the words. It is not essential that others understand the meaning of the words in my art, because they are only important to me. I have discovered that the emotions that stimulate and motivate me need a verbal "push" in order to be significant as content. The realization of this fact has made an impact on this phase of my art. I see it as a start in the development and progression into other directions, but with a conscious and deliberate intent to uncover more of my creative and psychic energy.

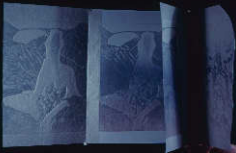
Carl G. Jung, in his book Man and His Symbols, states that words and images are symbolic when they imply something more than their obvious and immediate meaning. This, I believe, is the way words were used in my art. With time, and the study of Jung's theories, I have gained some insight into my work. His concepts on thought, intuition and feeling have helped me tremendously in understanding my own deep emotions and feelings and how I express them.

One of the goals for my art would be that it assert its own claim to validity, reflecting personality and feelings. This reflection of personal statement and emotion has been very satisfying. I plan to search for new ways of creative expression, while I continue to develop my current method of working. The advancement of my art should be a natural one, with a conscious effort toward goals not yet established.

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The first of these is the fact that the  
 government has been unable to  
 maintain a stable currency. This  
 has led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people. The second  
 is the fact that the government  
 has been unable to maintain  
 a stable economy. This has  
 led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people. The third  
 is the fact that the government  
 has been unable to maintain  
 a stable society. This has  
 led to a loss of confidence  
 in the government and a  
 consequent loss of support  
 from the people.

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the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* has increased in the United Kingdom [10].

There is a paucity of data on the epidemiology of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom. The only published study of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom was by Roberts *et al.* [11], who reported the results of a study of *S. flexneri* isolates from patients with acute colitis in the United Kingdom between 1988 and 1992. The isolates were typed by phage-typing and by plasmid profile. The results of the phage-typing study are presented in this paper.

#### MATERIALS

Between 1988 and 1992, 1000 isolates of *S. flexneri* were obtained from patients with acute colitis in the United Kingdom. The isolates were obtained from 10 hospitals in the United Kingdom. The isolates were obtained from patients with acute colitis who had been referred to the hospital by their general practitioner.

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